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LETTER DATED 26 APRIL 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to the previous letters addressed by the Government of the Sudan to the President of the Security Council (S/1995/522, S/1995/569, S/1996/358, S/1996/1007, S/1997/2, S/1997/11 and S/1997/271) and with reference to the letter sent by the Permanent Representative of Eritrea on 11 April 1997 (S/1997/309). I have the honour to transmit to you a cable message dated 25 April 1997 from His Excellency Ali Osman M. Taha, Minister for External Relations of the Republic of the Sudan, which refers to a public statement made by the Head of the Eritrean regime, Assias Afwerki, on Thursday, 24 April 1997, in Asmara (see annex). In his statement, the Head of the Eritrean regime made a public confession that Eritrean troops were fighting alongside the Sudanese rebels in eastern Sudan. He went on to state that the destruction of the Government of the Sudan was a priority for Eritrea and that "this can be done only by force".

These statements confirm the repeated notes sent to the Security Council concerning the Eritrean aggression against the Sudanese people and against the territorial integrity of the Sudan. The threat posed by the Eritrean regime's policies is not only targeting the Sudan but also endangers the peace and security of the region and the continent as a whole.

I should be grateful if you would bring the contents of the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hamid ELTINAY
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 25 April 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

On a number of previous occasions I have had the honour to draw your attention to the excesses of the Eritrean regime, and the flagrant acts of aggression it continues to carry out against my country, threatening its security and stability, and bringing my country and the African continent to the brink of catastrophe. I have also conveyed the fact that such disgraceful practices, repeatedly carried out by Eritrea, run counter to all international and regional norms, which reject the use or threat of use of force, and flout in the most blatant and dangerous manner the principles of good-neighbourliness and respect for the sovereignty and regional integrity of States. The response of the Eritrean regime has consistently been to maintain its hostile policies and continue its ventures without inhibition or restraint.

On this occasion, I find myself compelled to inform you that the Head of the Eritrean regime has reached new heights in showing disdain for and defiance of international and regional opinion. It was reported by Agence France-Presse that at a conference held in Asmara on Thursday, 24 April 1997 he openly and unambiguously declared that Eritrean forces were fighting alongside Sudanese rebels. Further, he stated that one of his Government's main aims was to overthrow the Sudanese Government by force. At the same time he admitted that Eritrean forces had suffered losses in their war against the Sudanese army.

The admissions made by the Eritrean regime regarding the war that it is waging against the Sudan, which this time came from the Head of the Eritrean regime himself, clearly demonstrate the dangers of the path chosen by Eritrea, and expose the hostile designs of its regime, which threaten peace and security in the African continent. Such admissions, which we have referred to in our previous letters to you, also confirm the reality of the aggression unleashed against the Sudan and its territory. Coupled with the statements made by Eritrean and Ugandan prisoners of war, they clearly reflect the magnitude of foreign designs on the Sudan.

In bringing the admissions made by the Head of the Eritrean regime to your attention, I should also like to point out that the continuation of these acts of aggression will push the region and the continent closer to the furnace of total confrontation. While the Sudan reserves the right to resist this aggression, it appeals to the international and regional communities to put a halt to this behaviour and to such criminal aggression.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated to all Member States.

(Signed) Ali Osman Mohamed TAHA
Minister for Foreign Affairs